



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: May 16, 2011 (11-10)
Contact: Jason Kelly (360) 902-1815

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
Visit our Web site at: agr.wa.gov

State veterinarian cautions horse owners about EHV-1 outbreak

OLYMPIA – A Washington horse that attended the National Cutting Horse Association event in Ogden, Utah from April 30 to May 8 has tested positive for a highly contagious animal disease, Equine Herpes Virus 1 (EHV-1). Several confirmed cases in horses with severe symptoms have been found in Utah, Colorado and elsewhere.

“While I have not yet placed any restrictions on the movement of animals, I strongly suggest that horse owners isolate animals that attended the Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah,” said State Veterinarian Leonard Eldridge. “For the protection of other horses, these owners are advised to keep their animals home for a couple of weeks.”

The disease poses no threat to people, but symptoms in horses can include fever, sneezing, slobbering and other mild symptoms. Serious cases of the disease are rare, but can include staggering, hind-end paralysis and even death of the horse.

A horse that attended the Ogden show was treated at the Washington State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Pullman and was confirmed over the weekend to be positive for EHV-1. Blood samples from several other Washington horses that attended the Utah event are currently being tested at WSU’s Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

The disease is spread from horse to horse through direct contact, on feed, tack and equipment, or on the clothes and hands of horse owners. While there is no human public health threat associated with the disease, horse owners should carefully wash their hands and equipment to prevent the spread of the virus.

The time of exposure to illness of EHV-1 is typically two to 14 days. Horse owners attending the Ogden show should consider limiting the movement of their horses and isolate them from other horses to prevent further spread of the virus.

Horses that show any symptoms of EHV-1 should be seen by a veterinarian. Positive cases of EHV-1 must be reported to the State Veterinarian’s Office at (360) 902-1881.

More information on the virus can be found at <http://www.aaep.org/ehv.htm>.

###